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HOW TO MAKE THE BEST of LIFE

HEALTH

FEELINGS

BREATHING

DRINKING

EATING

OVER-WORK

CHANGE

&c.



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BY
J. MORTIMER GRANVILLE

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1881.

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PREFACE.

IN adding another volume to my series of little books on the mental phases of personal hygiene, it must not be supposed that I fail to recognise the faults of those which have already appeared. No one, probably, is more sensible of their imperfections than I am.

They all bear irritating marks of the haste with which the component papers were written at various times, with different purposes ; and there is much need of amendment as to the selection made and the manner in which they have been grouped together under arbitrarily chosen titles. For example, "The Secret of a Clear Head" should have been issued as a supplement to "Common Mind-Troubles," of which it forms part.

It is, however, only from a literary point of view that I regret the original style of these articles, and the mode of their presentation in a collected form. To the views expressed in them I adhere, although I would gladly have the opportunity of strengthening many of the arguments used, and of simplifying much that is needlessly obscured by the language employed.

If the present collection should meet as warm and kindly a reception as that which has been accorded to its predecessors, I shall be more than ever convinced that *matter* is of higher moment than *manner* in any attempt to interest the public, and that readers and reviewers are alike generous and forbearing.

J. MORTIMER GRANVILLE.

May 25th, 1881.

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HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF LIFE.

HEALTH.

HEALTH is not something superadded to the life and self-experience of body and mind, but a simply natural life and self-experience of body and mind without any felt hindrance from weakness or disorder in either part of the being. It is a purely relative term. What is health to one individual may be disease, or at least incapacity, to another. It is therefore necessary to speak of health as a condition or state which, while it is doubtless governed by general laws, cannot be defined in the abstract. It is important to bear this in mind when laying down what are termed maxims of personal health.

What is one man's meat may be another man's poison; and those only are wise who, in seeking to conform to what they believe to be the general laws of health, concern themselves with the prin-

ciples, rather than the practice, laid down for their guidance. Nevertheless there are certain broad lines of policy as to the requirements of the body and the mind which deserve to be pressed on the attention of the community more strongly than they have hitherto been urged, while the principles which underlie them are, at the same time, clearly explained.

The first consideration I would suggest is that the compound organism of man is a self-sustaining piece of machinery, constructed to act and govern itself without more than a very ordinary share of conscious attention. If this be not understood, and Self—that is, what we call “Nature”—is not trusted, there can scarcely fail to be many a break-down. The concentration of thought on personal health is in itself a probable cause of disorderly action and disease, just as the most perfect piece of mechanism may be injured by the frequent meddling of an engineer who does not thoroughly understand it. No one can perfectly comprehend the conditions of his own health, and he is therefore in the position of the inexpert meddler to whom I have compared him.

The human organism is, or should be, self-protecting. This is, however, only partially the fact, because we inherit all sorts of inclinations and appetites, and likes and dislikes from our ancestors, which are the fruits of their habits, and those habits have been too generally un-

healthy. It is, nevertheless, in the main certain that instinct will tell the rationally-trained child what is good for it. For example, in the way of food and drink; setting aside inherited and acquired tastes, the palate and the appetite are fairly safe guides in the selection of a dietary.

The same is true as to general modes of life. The child grows sleepy when the sun goes down, and would rise, if it could, with the return of day. Those adults who lead the least artificial and conventional lives, particularly in the rural districts and at sea, follow nearly the same general usage.

In respect of clothing also the impulses of nature guide and teach us as long as we will, or can—"by permission" of Fashion—be instructed. Thus, no child or unconventional person willingly wears a tight or stiff article of clothing, or anything that constricts or confines the limbs. The infant frets if a string restrains it, or a band presses around any part of its body, and resents the attempt to clothe it needlessly.

Take, by way of illustration, the clothing of the extremities. Few children, of any age, willingly wear coverings to their feet or hands, which nature designed above all other parts to be wholly free. This matter, to which I allude only incidentally, is one of considerable interest, and, in relation to health, of great importance. Attention is every now and again called to the subject by the best,

and least *conventional* of the writers on hygiene; but the hold which fashion has gained on the masses in all grades and ranks of the community, and popular prejudice, are so strong, that the thought of letting children run barefooted, even in their play, although every indication points to this as the proper policy of domestic life, is scouted as soon as it is suggested.

No little infant is happy until it has pulled off its shoes and socks; but no mother or father is content to accept this as an indication that the articles of dress—we cannot call them clothing—which are systematically rejected are needless, and therefore mischievous.

One half the colds caught by the weakly and sensitive are traceable to chilled or damp feet. Why is this? Because we persist in making the extremities unnaturally susceptible to changes of temperature by covering them constantly. If they were left unclothed, they would not only be well formed, but perfectly able to resist every change of temperature, and to maintain their due internal heat while acting as relieving parts to the blood-current.

The foot is one of the most perfect and complex pieces of the organism. Like the hand, it bears a direct relation to the brain; but we pack it away in a rigid case which disables it and either arrests its development or causes it to waste in a state of uselessness.

Every child should be left unencumbered with shoes until the latest period practicable, which, in the case of girls, at least, may be an advanced stage of youth; and, when the natural usage must, in obedience to the unyielding rules of society, be abandoned, it will be found that the lightest, the loosest, and most easily-shifted of foot-coverings are the best.

For old and young alike socks are preferable to stockings, and low shoes to boots. The more freely the perspiration can escape from our foot-casings, and the air can obtain access to and play around the feet, while the muscles are able to act at every step, the better. Clothing the feet perpetually is like wearing gloves always. It would be conducive to health if these several "articles of dress" could be viewed in the same light and worn only under the same conditions. This is one of the points in respect to which nature rather than fashion should be our guide.

If the multitude would live less by rule and more by instinct in the matter of food, habit, and clothing, there would be a larger proportion of healthy and happy lives. The general lesson to learn is that the machine, man, is well devised and constructed, and would last out his days with greater certainty if we were a little less empirical than we now are in respect to the efforts we lavish on his health.

The next reflection it occurs to me to make is

that man is sent into the world with a limited stock of vitality, which he cannot expect to enjoy during a long period if he lives too fast. The world is full of flickering tapers, which have burnt prematurely to the socket and are kept alive only by a very humiliating amount of preservation.

Men who will use up their brain-tissue in inordinate competitive work early in life must expect to come to the end of their resources prematurely. Some fail on the threshold of manhood, exhausted by the intellectual efforts they have made to prepare themselves for it. The like is true of muscular strength, of digestion and nutrition, and of every system and function of the body.

Although every part of the organism grows by use, there is a limit to the reproductive power of the living particles of which the body is composed. Each class of corpuscles has its natural history and its independent life; and if through mismanagement any class is exhausted by too rapid consumption, it cannot be replaced, and either the integrity of the organism as a whole will be impaired, if the particular tissue prematurely exhausted be essential to health, or the special organ which has been rashly worked and "used up" is for the remainder of life inactive, and partially or wholly wastes.

Personal health is the first concern of man as a

participator of the life which now is; but it is not "by being anxious" in an inordinate or unduly fussy fashion that he can hope to live long or well. The best way to live well is to work well. Good work is the daily test and safeguard of personal health. I do not mean "over-work," or "under-work," or making a great show of energy, but doing what we have to do "with our might"—that is, earnestly and with industry, bringing the powers of mind and body to bear on the task as though it were worth doing, and therefore worth doing thoroughly well.

If those who desire health for themselves and their families could be induced to live in closer conformity with the laws and instincts of an intelligent life, they would secure a larger share of that greatest of all blessings, "personal health," and hand down a better heritage of habit, inclination, and appetite, to those who are destined to be their successors, and whose destiny they must help to shape.

Personal hygiene is in two senses personal. It is hygiene of the person, and, in a special and almost pure sense, *personal* in its scope and possibilities. I have insisted on the importance of avoiding undue carefulness for the health of the body and mind. By a fidgety and timid policy of self-preservation life may be so embittered that it will cease to be worth living. By too much introspection the consciousness may, so to say,

be made to consume itself. These are evils and dangers against which it is needful to guard.

Meanwhile something must be said on the other side of the question. Neglect is scarcely less injurious to body and mind than excess in precaution. The practical aim should be to live an orderly and natural life, and to leave contingencies to be met by the force and strength of those safeguards with which the physical and mental being is surrounded by the collateral effects of its own systematic and habitual healthiness. If the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. If the life be pure, the whole nature will be full of health and in a persistent state of bodily and mental soundness.

Health-preservation does not so much consist in the avoidance of disease as in the establishment of a habit to which disease is foreign, and by which the invasion of disease will be resisted. We were not intended to pick our way through the world trembling at every step, but to walk boldly, secure in the confidence that "a sound mind in a sound body" is able to triumph over all ordinary difficulties and to surmount the perils it cannot escape.

Disorderly activity is the first departure from health in every function, and it is against this departure the life should be most resolutely guarded. The way to protect ourselves from this danger is to make the whole life orderly and to keep it so.

Some nervous folk make the mistake of supposing that an orderly life must necessarily be a life "by rule."

How opposed this assumption is to the principle illustrated throughout nature should be apparent on the most general observation. There is nothing like uniformity in the material world. Diversity of form and colour characterises the face of nature; and, with all the rhythm and order we discern in the customs and processes of nature, there is no sameness. Nature abhors "vain repetitions."

Enough of individualism presents itself in every stage of a natural existence to redeem the commonest experiences of healthy life from the reproach of being monotonous. When man with his fancy views of the reign of law tries to establish order, he resorts to a process of government by *rule*; and, whether the subject of his control be himself or those around him, he incurs the irksome and enervating influence of uniformity.

Nothing can well be more directly opposed and even antagonistic to the conditions of health than a severe austerity. Take the buoyancy and spring that result from expectancy out of life, and existence becomes a labour and an exhausting toil. The mill-horse round of duty and relaxation which a life by rule entails is in itself unhealthy.

It is pitiful to watch the weary progress of the

valetudinarian who in his misconception of order self-imposes a burden. The only marvel is that life should be practicable under a *régime* which admits neither of hope nor of emotion, but is full of unceasing solicitude what to eat, what to drink, and what to put on or lay aside. The life of the body is squandered in the energy bestowed on the ordering of its food and raiment.

The problem of health is to live easily and happily, without worry about self, and with such cheerfulness as consists in taking the world and life as we find them—neither grieving over-much for its sorrows, nor revelling too eagerly in its so-called enjoyments. Those approach most nearly and safely to the solution of this problem who so live as not of the world, and yet as placed in, and passing through, it with a keenly sensitive appreciation of the opportunities life affords, and the self-improvement to which, when rightly used, its vicissitudes minister.

We are not sent into this world to be miserable, nor was life given us to be wasted in melancholy regrets for its emptiness and wants and weaknesses. Another great point is to make the best of what may be vouchsafed us rather than to pile up an agony of regret in manifold mournings over disappointment. If we have little health, let us make the most of it, instead of frittering away what we have in lamentations poured out on the score of its littleness.

One of the considerations which should be suggested by the reflection that health is personal is that both the opportunity and the responsibility for its maintenance are personal. We hear a great deal about the need of *public* measures for the preservation of health, and of the obligations which rest on the State and the community. Let us think more of our own individual share of the burden.

Every man may be relatively healthy—that is, healthy up to the limits of his physical and mental organisation—if he will; and the way to reach that level is to live naturally, wisely, and as common-sense and instinct combine to guide the judgment, with neither excessive carefulness nor extreme carelessness, but the mean of intelligent reasonableness and independence which lies midway between the two.

29. Sept. 71

“FEELINGS.”

THE feeling of being “below par,” “not up to the mark,” or “not very well,” has much to answer for. This is one of the excuses of lifeless and lazy folk with no heart and energy in their work, and not obedient to the law and obligations of duty. The world is full of such persons, and society has, to a certain extent, become

accustomed to their presence, and is resigned to the inconvenience their apathy and inertness entail.

Indeed, in some degree the temperament or habit of life characterised by this supineness has come to be tolerated, and even accredited with a claim to consideration at the hands of the common run of healthy people. A "delicate" organisation, which responds to every change of temperature, and rises and falls in tone with the mercury in the barometer, is held to entitle its possessor to peculiar respect and forbearance.

This is provoking; but it is one of the "fine traits" of an advanced civilisation, and helps to form the fringe around that robust sympathy which true humanity always feels for the weak. The monster who should dare to say or do anything which might "jar on the nerves" or "wound the sensibilities" of one who does "not feel very well" would justly incur the indignation of society.

There is some truth, but also a great deal of nonsense, in this conventional view of the case; and it is my present not very gracious purpose to sift the modicum of wheat and blow away the chaff from a pretty but rather factitious idea.

First, as regards self. It is a mistake of policy, in self-management, to give way to the sense of "not feeling very well." Those who habitually pamper their feelings in this fashion probably do not realise the mischief they are doing. They

are attuned to idleness, and ease-loving, and the consciousness becomes blunted, so that they cannot recognise the injurious effect on character—and reflexly on the organism—produced by the habit of self-deception.

Those who are naturally more energetic, but who occasionally find themselves caught in the toils of an indolence which excuses itself by describing the reluctance to move as a form of weakness or sickness, are in a better position to judge that feeling aright. Sifted to its bottom, it is a mere affectation, and one to which no self-respecting man or woman ought to submit.

The harm done by yielding is great; and the influence such a surrender works must be physically injurious, because it induces the very weakness or illness which was believed to exist and prematurely pleaded as an excuse. The facts are simple; and it is well that everybody should understand them.

Whatsoever differences of opinion may prevail as to the inter-relations of mind and body, it is admitted by all that the connections between the two parts of man's nature are exceedingly close. As a matter of fact, the body is, in a practical sense, worked by and through the mental consciousness.

It has been repeatedly said, and with truth, that in a perfect state of health a man should not be aware of the existence of special organs in his

body. For example, he ought not to feel that he has a liver or a stomach, and, in a physical sense, he should not be conscious of having a heart.

At the same time most of us are more or less unpleasantly impressed with the fact that there are laws in our members warring against the mind; and it is through the mind only, or mainly, that we can subdue and coerce these subsidiary but insubordinate parts to their proper lines and spheres of duty.

Thus it comes to pass that, while man ought not to be troubled with the details of his own existence, he finds a considerable share of his energy absorbed in moving the machinery of his life before he can even think of doing anything outside self. This is a wofully unnatural state of things, but it is a disorder to which most of us are liable. It remains to act as wisely as we can under the conditions of life partly entailed, partly forced upon us by circumstances, and partly created for us by our personal misconduct.

Now there are two ways of treating the difficulty—we may give way to the “feeling” of weakness, or we may surmount it. The best policy is to refuse to be made subject to feelings, and so fling back on the organism the duty of managing its own affairs. To speak as we feel, it is as though the inner life of humanity had been placed under the control of a subordinate consciousness which was at once dilatory, fanciful, and indolent, and as

if this sub-consciousness were perpetually on the watch for excuses to justify the neglect of its duty and thus shift the responsibility of self-government on to the mind.

What is a “hypochondriac” but an unhappy creature who has been wheedled into undertaking the direct and personal control of his liver, his lungs, and even his brains? Instead of working, he is for ever sharpening and repairing his tools. His whole life is a wearisome toil. He is like one of those scientific toys in which ingeniously-contrived machinery is made to move by electricity, but in simply moving it exhausts the utmost limits of its power, so that the outcome of all the fuss and turmoil is—nothing.

Note here well

How many lives are of this character—namely, “used up” in the act of living! The miserable being who goes about suffering under the inconvenience of “not feeling very well” is the victim of a tacit acceptance of responsibilities which nature never designed him to bear, and which he is constitutionally unable to discharge.

No man is gifted with the power of doing double duty. He cannot be his own steersman on deck and superintend the machinery below without running the risk of a collision or going ashore—in short, without neglecting the life of relation for which he has been sent into the world, and for which his physical and mental powers have been given to him.

The body must take care of itself and do its own duty, which is to keep the compound creature in health, to provide it with vigour for exertion—not simply the mere useless function of living, but *work*. It was intended that man should enjoy life; but his enjoyment was to be derived from applying the powers and capacities of life to useful purposes, not from the bare fact of existence. This is a matter concerning which many—perhaps the greater part of mankind—make a serious and grievous mistake.

Next, as regards others, there is a ceaseless source of inconvenience in “not feeling very well.” The behests of duty are, as we have said, left unfulfilled and its calls are unanswered; but there is more than this. Persons who do not feel very well are a source of trouble to those around them. They throw all the relations of social and business life into disorder. They are unpunctual, they break their promises, they cause the folk around and, in a certain sense, dependent on them, serious annoyances. In short, they make existence harder and more irksome than it would be without them; and at the same time they are not themselves one whit the better or the happier for the injury they inflict on others.

It is no kindness to give way to the whims and accept the excuses of the “not very well.” Many a man would be saved from the toils of real disease if he were checked in the act of “giving

way” to it. It follows that the sacrifice made by those who strive to put up with the neglect and irritability of this lazy class of fanciful folk is useless. In truth, it is worse than vain, for it encourages and increases the evil it attempts to relieve.

Why, then, should society and the community generally be expected to deal mercifully with the weak and delicate? Such persons might be told off to light tasks; but they ought at the same time to be shunted on to sidings, and not be allowed to block the main lines of life and enterprise. A more sturdy view of the situation would not be without its result.

We sometimes hear the lack of sympathy displayed by the “very well” condemned as “hard-heartedness.” It would go far to reduce the total amount of sickness, real as well as imaginary, if there were more of this “want of feeling” in places of authority. For one invalid or weakly person who might chance to suffer in consequence of the rough usage to which he was subjected, there would be a score of the morbidly imaginative rescued from the misery of self-induced bad health. I firmly believe one half of the confirmed invalids of the day could be cured of their maladies if they were compelled to live busy and active lives, and had no time to fret over their miseries.

“Feelings” are always apt to mislead; and

they are especially likely to do so when they centre on some particular part of self which is the supposed seat of chronic or incurable "weakness." Unless a man or woman is actually disabled for work by mechanical injury or physical disease, there ought to be no shirking of duty on the plea of "not feeling well."

The way to feel well is to work well. The body grows by exercise. It takes in just as much nutriment as it requires, the measure of "requirement" being determined by the amount of tissue consumed in previous exertions. It is so with the nervous power which works the machinery of thought and action as a whole.

If the Will be not active, it cannot be strong. If the feelings are not kept healthy by vigorous exercise, they are sure to become morbid. It by no means follows that a man must *be* ill because he *feels* unwell. Meanwhile, it is more than probable that by allowing his feelings to get the better of him he will make himself ill. The way to keep in health is to feel strong.

I can readily fancy the reader throwing down this book in disgust, if he be one of those poor souls who are in the habit of "not feeling very well"; but, when he takes it up again at the bidding of conscience, let him understand that these pointed statements are not made without the deepest conviction of their entire accuracy.

I am in solemn earnest when protesting against

what I believe to be one of the most seductive and mischievous of errors in self-management, namely, the practice of giving way to inertia, weakness, and depression. If there be any real ground for these “feelings,” it will be increased by submission to their influence. It is in moods like these that the machinery of life has a tendency to stop; and the wise man will pluck up all his energy and live, instead of lying down to die. Power in reserve gives strength in action, and action begets power. Be up and doing. The worse you feel the greater is your need to struggle against the feeling of “lowness.” Many a brave spirit has cut short an attack of illness and avoided a bed of sickness by a resolute determination to resist the downward tendency of a feeling of not being very well.

It is the same with the struggle against mortal disease. The battle will last as long as the wrestler with death can hold out. Those who desire to live should settle this well in their minds, that nerve-power is the force of life, and that the Will has a wondrously strong and direct influence over the body through the brain and the nervous system.

Very often the issue of a case of grave disease will depend on the vital power of the sufferer, and, if the Will be strong, the enemy may be foiled by the sheer force of “feeling.” Rest assured that feeling is a veritable power for good or evil in

the organism, and that it is in the highest degree unwise to encourage or tolerate a bad habit of subjective experience.

It may seem that I lay excessive stress on the power of the mind over the body. In the busy haste of life there is, happily, too much occasion for thought about things outside ourselves to admit of any very large measure of introspection. If it were not so, the world would be full of valetudinarians. It is however the fact that, setting aside special organic diseases, a man's health is very much what he makes it by *feeling*.

Those who are perpetually trying to save their lives are in danger of losing them, while the naturally active, who are too much engrossed with other matters to dwell on their own "state" and feelings, go on from year to year, and at length outlive the dangers that threaten them.

"Wrapping-up," "feeding by rule," "avoiding cold," "taking care," are devices by which existence is converted into a prolonged weariness. It is impossible not to feel, as we watch the laborious self-preservation in which many otherwise sensible persons engage, that life under such conditions can be scarcely worth having. It must be a white elephant.

Better go on, and drop the chain that drags so heavily at every step. If the progress made be not as rapid or easy as could be desired, it cannot be rendered easier or more pleasant for being

plagued with the perpetual remembrance of all the difficulties that have to be surmounted, and the perils which it is desired to escape.

Not unfrequently it may happen that the pains taken to prolong life actually shorten it. The nerve-force which would have been sufficient to carry the organism over a critical period—for example, the early years of adolescence—is consumed in anxiety as to the future, until the life-strength—that is, the power of *living*—expires. It is as though the driver of a locomotive should blow off all his steam in sounding the whistle or testing some valve of his engine. The illustration may seem crude, but it expresses my meaning.

There is no less sagacious, or more mistaken, enterprise than “the pursuit of health.” It would be all very well if it were the health of some other person we sought; but it is our own; and we are apt to become exhausted, and fall ill on the chase. It is like making a violent effort to go to sleep—the effort keeps us awake. So the striving to live and be healthy wears out life and induces disease and death.

BREATHING.

THERE is no act or function of life which seems more important to existence than that of breathing. If an animal ceases to breathe, we say it

has ceased to live. The process in which air is taken into the lungs by inspiration and ejected by respiration is tributary to the supply of oxygen to the blood and the removal of its effete gases, the products of decomposition and principally carbonic acid.

If this exchange of gases could be effected by any other process than that of air-breathing, the end would be gained; the means are only of secondary importance. In the cases of fishes we know that water is made to act as a vehicle for the conveyance of air, and so answers the purpose which in the case of air-breathing animals is served directly by the atmosphere; and those animals which require only a very limited supply of oxygen for their support can preserve life with the scanty measure of air obtainable through the interstices of the soil or in the minimum of water contained in mud.

Meanwhile the higher classes of animals, and man, the supreme member of the animal kingdom — so far as we are aware — are air-breathing creatures and dependent on the breath of life.

I do not propose to discuss the scientific aspects of the breathing process, but simply to throw together a few remarks and considerations suggestive of the light in which the atmosphere ought to be regarded by us, and the high importance that should be attached to its intimate composition and the use we make of it.

Food is required to build up the body and to furnish materials for the reconstruction of those parts or tissues of the fabric which have been consumed by use.

Every act of life, every movement we make, every thought that passes through our mind energising the brain, which is the organ of mind, involves the final use of some particles of the body. In the great majority of instances this use consumes the material energised, so far as its then present form is concerned. It cannot be employed again, and it must be disorganised and removed.

This disorganisation and removal is effected through the agency of the blood, which circulates throughout the organism and brings the materials of food within reach of the living and growing cells of which every tissue in the body is composed. These cells draw nourishment and material for their own construction from the blood, just as the plant takes up the material necessary to form its structure from the earth through its rootlets.

The method of growth is essentially the same throughout the organic world, whether animal or vegetable. The process of feeding consists in the interchange of elements, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, and the like, contained in, or derived from, the food appropriated.

In short, the vital process is in large measure chemical, and the oxydising agent—oxygen de-

rived from the atmosphere—is the most potent agent and factor in the production of the general result. If the supply of this agent is not sufficient for the vast purposes which it is required to effect, the consequences cannot be other than disastrous.

All other supplies may be abundant, but, if that of oxygen fails, the animal must suffer a diminution of health and in the end die. It is plain therefore that the phrase “breath of life” is full of the deepest significance. It tells the story simply and truly; if the animal cannot breathe—using that term with its broad meaning—it must cease to live.

It follows that the first concern of the living being, for himself and others, should be to secure a full and fresh supply of pure air. In the case of children this is especially necessary, for the obvious reason that the chemico-vital changes of structure in their organisms are more active and persistent than those which take place in the adult body.

The child is growing in bulk, as well as constantly using up the materials of its body and requiring to replace them by new. The result is a large, continuous, and inexorable demand for copious supplies of fresh air.

How is that demand complied with in the majority of cases? Growing children ought to live in the open air; but we mew them up in

school-rooms and confine them to the house on the smallest pretext of bad weather or indisposition.

When a child is ill, its systemic demand for air is not diminished, but rather increased, as is plainly shown by the quickened pulse and breathing; albeit the rapid pulse and bodily heat of fever are popularly regarded as the causes, instead of the consequences, of that morbid state.

It would be well if parents could be brought to understand that bad weather is no excuse for the confinement of children indoors.

The danger of "cold" is increased by this treatment. Children are made delicate, and susceptible to the depressing effects of sudden, or great, changes of temperature, by the practice of calling or keeping them indoors for every shower of rain or cold wind. They are also rendered generally weakly by wrapping-up. Air, whether temperate or cold, is the essential element and agent of life, and, when the life is young, the demand for this element is greatest and most exacting. Later on in years the requirement is very much in proportion to the activity.

The more exercise a man takes, the larger will be his demand for air; but it must not be forgotten that, even in a state of rest, the need for oxygen is considerable. The strictly scientific experimentalist, concerned solely to ascertain the minimum supply which the animal requires, discovers that the quantity necessary is very large;

but in practice it is found to be much larger than even he suspects, and, if health is to be maintained, it must be in excess of the actual chemical requirements. In truth, the more air of the purest description which can be taken into the lungs the better. We ought not to try to do with the least, but to use the largest, possible quantity.

Then comes the question of quality. Having enough, we ought to be sure that it is good. Breath will not be the "breath of life" unless it is fresh and clear. Wind is, as a rule, an advantage, because there is less chance of the atmosphere we inhale having stood stagnant over bad soil, or around sources of poisonous or deleterious exhalations, and thus contracted pollution. We want pure air and plenty of it; and it is worth any trouble or risk to obtain this supply.

It is too much the fashion to neglect the subject of atmosphere while we are busy with questions of water-supply, sewerage, vaccination, and the other thousand and one precautions against disease which the community is unceasingly urged to adopt. There is nothing more conducive to health, and therefore inimical to disease, than air which is free from impurities and highly oxygenated. Breathing bad air—that is, air which has been polluted, or is charged with an accumulation of carbonic acid by the respiration of a crowd of persons—is most disastrous. Many persons contract nameless or undefined

diseases in densely-packed assemblies, where the atmosphere is unnaturally heated and fouled.

The “stifling feeling” and “headache” which are so commonly produced by sitting in a theatre or public meeting are the immediate and more pronounced effects of breathing bad air; but, long before these inconveniences are consciously experienced, and even when they are entirely absent, harm is being done. The robust may not feel the effects, but they too are injured, while the weakly are enfeebled, and the seeds of disease are sown, and will probably spring up later on, and cause trouble of some kind. If we were really in earnest—and intelligent in our earnestness—about health-preservation, we should avoid heated and crowded assemblies as we would shun a pest-house. The breath of life is pure air; and foul air is the breath of death. One should be sought, the other avoided.

Nature’s preventive measure against disease, whether in the individual or in the multitude, is a bath of pure air, enveloping the surface of the body, purging away the vapours that rise from living and dead organisms, and from the earth, and filling the lungs with the elements which are essential to the performance of all vital processes. When will the community begin to recognise this natural mode of “sanitation,” and to imitate it? Instead of staying indoors when threatened with illness, if we were wise, we should go out, not into

the murky and polluted air of a great city, but into the fresh air of the country.

It will of course happen in a large proportion of instances that morbid and mistaken habits have made the organism so susceptible to the effect of even slight changes of temperature that danger would now attend exposure without proper precautions. This however is a drawback which does not affect the value of Nature's remedy, though it may limit the use we can make of it. The aim should be to spare the next generation this risk by habituating children from birth to reasonable exposure.

In nine out of ten cases of indisposition occurring in early life, and a very large proportion of the maladies of adult life, an instant change of air into a pure atmosphere would convert the morbid state into one of comparative if not complete immunity from disease. I strongly counsel my readers to set a higher value on air than it is the wont to attach to this element, and to remember that a pure atmosphere is not only to be cherished for its own sake and the health it gives, but to be employed as the most potent and ever-ready weapon wherewith to ward off any attack of illness.

The breath of life is almost the only part of our common means of subsistence which every free man, whether rich or poor, can claim for his birthright. He must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; but he breathes when he will, and in

a state of health there should be no pain or labour in breathing. The obstacles we encounter to a free use of the breathing-organs are entirely of our own making.

In what is called society, dress is one of the most formidable difficulties to be overcome. Women encase their bodies in stays so that the chest cannot expand as nature intended it should, and the act of breathing is proportionately embarrassed. This is one of the most stupid and mischievous practices which the tyrant Fashion has forced on her devotees. Many of the follies to which vanity impels the unwise are injurious; but this is the worst of all. Tight or stiff stays are the apparatus of disease and make ill-health.

Every process of life depends for its performance on the integrity of the breathing function, and it is impossible that this should be fulfilled while the thorax is imprisoned and its every movement hampered. The chest must heave with perfect freedom; it must expand in all directions and be able to change its shape instantly and completely.

So essential is this mobility in the case of woman, that nature has made the bony skeleton which encloses her breathing-organs more elastic, and rendered it capable of longer movements in every direction than that of man. Fashion steps in, and, contradicting the fiat of the Maker, imposes her canons of beauty—a miserable figment

of her own silly conception—as an improvement on the design and work of the Creator.

A great deal has been said and written on this subject; but, so far as I am aware, one consideration has been overlooked. Even if the apparatus in which the chest is enclosed be not tight and stiff to such an extent as to impede ordinary respiration, it must inevitably prevent those instantaneous changes of form, and in the rate of motion, which are essential to compensate the movements of the heart.

The physiological problem of life is to supply the blood with oxygen. To this end the whole blood in the body courses through the vessels under the pump-like action of the heart, being exposed in detail to the air in the lungs. The heart contracts, say, roughly, four times to every inspiration or breath. This exhausts the oxygen in the air taken in by the lungs, and it is necessary to breathe again.

The breathing must be proportionate in frequency to the heart's action. If the heart beats fast from any cause, the breathing requires to be accelerated; when the heart's action becomes slow, the breathing must be slowed also. Conversely, if the breathing is quickened, the heart will beat fast; while, if the inspiration of air is carried on tardily, the movements of the heart diminish; it first beats slowly, then jerkily and hurriedly, and in the end would fail. When the

atmosphere taken in by the lungs is deficient in oxygen or is overcharged with carbonic acid the heart will at first beat quickly in the attempt to extract oxygen from the air, it will then grow weak, and at last, under the irritant effect of carbonised blood circulating through the nerve-centres, it will throb rapidly, while the lungs heave and gasp tumultuously in a final endeavour to obtain the oxygen on which life depends.

It is indispensable that the apparatus of breathing should be free to vary its rate of movement and to adapt the speed and depth of its inspirations instantly, as need arises, to the altered conditions of the heart. Women suffer from palpitation of the heart and undefined but distressing sensations in connection with that organ—even setting up actual disease—because they *will* wear stays. It is useless to discuss the subject further with them—no bad fashion was ever yet set aside except by the desire for change or in consequence of ridicule—but the fact remains that the wearing of stays and corsets, however skilfully they are made, and however loose and comfortable they may seem, is a fruitful source of feminine misery and weakness.

It is not alone against “tight-lacing” physicians must raise their protest, in the interests of health. Stiff clothing, of all descriptions, is a mistake, but that which encases the chest and hampers the action of the breath-organs assails the vital energy at its very centre, intercepting the breath of life.

Another point of moment is habit. Those who would be healthy should form a habit of free and full respiration. This is one of the great reasons why exercise—and particularly exercise in the open air—is necessary for children. It “expands their lungs.” The young should be encouraged to breathe deeply and fully; and the only way to form this habit of health is to let them play boisterous games. There is no greater mistake than to bring up children by the fireside or in the nursery “quietly.”

No child of either sex, and particularly the female, unless it is habituated to rapid breathing by active exercise, can be healthy. The newly-born infant cries, and thereby expands its lungs and takes air into every cell. The growing child must laugh and shout and cry too—lustily sometimes—or it will not be healthy. The “quiet” children are puny and weak. They mope and fret and fall ill. Robust health requires joyous activity; and one of the ways in which this activity produces health is by forming a habit of full and deep breathing.

These are only, as I said at the outset, a few remarks and reflections thrown together to serve as practical hints; but, if the reader will give them the consideration the subject commands and deserves, they may not be valueless, especially to the valitudinarian and those who have the care of youth.

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Aug 18 '12

DRINKING.

IT is the fashion to say, and doubtless it is generally believed, that drunkenness is the greatest, or, at least, the most grievously oppressive, of our national vices. I am not altogether sure of the ground on which this proposition is based. Indeed, speaking personally, I may say that I believe there are many worse evils than the abuse of intoxicating drinks, and which produce much more disastrous and lasting effects.

Nor are these worse evils the consequences of drink, although they undoubtedly induce a frequent recourse to stimulants and indirectly lead to drunkenness. The crusade against "drink" is a war waged on a petty tyrant who is simply the myrmidon of a secret oppressor we do not dare to recognise, much less to encounter at close quarters and destroy.

There can be no question that the habit of intoxication is a hideous and unmanly offence against propriety; but there are vices more deeply imbedded and prolific of evil and evil consequences than a too free use of the cup which, if it cheers, certainly also inebriates.

I have not a word to say in apology for the practice vehemently denounced by all right-minded persons; but there is something to be urged on the subject of the vice itself, and, so far as I am aware, it is something which has not yet been said, in any case so as to command the attention of those who, while heaping every possible abuse and reproach on the crime of drunkenness, may have still one grain of compassion left for the drunkard.

There are several forms and causes of the propensity to excess in the use of intoxicating drinks; and, unless the essential difference between these is recognised, it is impossible, with any reasonable confidence of success in the enterprise, to undertake the reclamation of the "drunkard."

Speaking broadly, drunkards may be classed in three groups. *First*, those who drink because they thirst and are led to consume intoxicating beverages not so much by a preference for alcoholic beverages, as because it is the fashion of their class and associates to use these liquors as a means of slaking their thirst and as a symbol of friendliness and hospitality. *Second*, those who drink intoxicating liquors because they find them stimulating, and can thus relieve sensations of exhaustion. *Third*, those who have recourse to "drink" as a means of quieting the pangs of conscience, or to render themselves oblivious of

care, or from love of the dreamy and relaxed state of mind and body which is produced by these beverages.

First, as regards those who drink because they thirst, and who are led to use stimulants because friends with whom they associate employ them. The number of these persons is very great, and they are among the least pitiable of the so-called victims of "drink," because their fault is essentially a humiliating and discreditable lack of moral courage—the courage to do what they know to be right and to avoid doing what they are well assured is harmful and therefore wrong.

Drinking, as considered apart from the nature of the liquid consumed, is almost wholly a matter of habit. The quantity of fluid actually required by the body is to be measured by the loss in various ways of liquid constituents from the organism, insensible perspiration not being forgotten; but the manner of making up the loss, or compensating for it, is a matter of habit.

There is no more dangerous and senseless practice than that of drinking small drams, whether of spirits, beer, tea, milk, or water, at odd moments throughout the day.

This is a habit formed in childhood, and which ought to be prevented by proper discipline. The mother who feeds her infant capriciously to keep it quiet, and later on allows it to drink at short intervals, is laying the foundation for a habit

of longing for fluid which is exceedingly likely to take the form in adult life of a craving for "drink."

The infant is ever imbibing milk, the child ceaselessly drinking something—it may be only water, the growing boy "likes" lemonade and ginger-beer, the young man beer or sherry, the middle-aged man develops the taste farther, or perhaps we ought to say grafts a "taste" on the appetite, and then we have the mature drunkard.

Parents and those who have influence with the very young should know these things and act upon them. The young of both sexes, when they come to years of self-knowledge, should cure themselves of the habit which bad training may have formed; and the drunkard and his friends will be all the better prepared to struggle against the "demon of drink," as it is the fashion to call this habit in its worst development, when they understand that the evil against which they have principally to contend is not a craving for intoxicants so much as the craving or thirst for "something to drink."

Persons who, being addicted to intemperance, can look back and recall the fact that they have long cherished the bad habit of drinking frequently, will find a better reward for their effort, in wrestling directly with the craving or the thirst, than against the inclination to drink—intoxicants particularly.

Let the victim of this habit strive to lengthen the intervals between his recourses to drink of any kind. Let him make a point of taking enough tea or milk in the morning to last him until luncheon or dinner, and then to resist the desire of again drinking until he can do so advisedly at home, with his wits about him, and in the presence of that supreme consciousness and self-respect which is ever man's best monitor—his inner instinct of right.

There will of course always be difficulty in struggling with or against the habit, and this difficulty will be great in proportion to its inveteracy; but it is, I repeat, easier to contend against the habit of thirst directly than to resist the impulse to drink intoxicants if the need of drinking at all is not directly opposed and extinguished.

I would not be misunderstood. Of course there will always be the so-called "temptation" to drink with boon companions; but it will be a better stand-point for the struggler to refrain from drinking anything whatever than to strive for the selection of a harmless beverage. Let the "victim" cure himself of the bad habit of perpetually wanting "something to drink," and he will not be worried and overcome by the impulse to refresh himself at every public-house he chances to pass or to "take a glass" whenever he is asked to do so.

Second, the recourse to stimulants to relieve

feelings of exhaustion is a fruitful source of drunkenness. The causes of exhaustion are far better known to most of us than we are willing to admit, even to ourselves. Many a man goes on fancying himself an invalid when he is no more entitled to sympathy—on the score of illness—than the wanton who consciously weakens his own brains.

A life of purity and virtue, of self-restraint, and an orderly carrying out of wise purposes, would cure most of the feeble mortals who plead exhaustion as an excuse for, or who feel an inclination to, drink and drunkenness as offering relief from their bodily pain and physical misery.

This state of matters is never hopeless, and it is generally easily curable, if sufferers will only deal honestly by themselves and understand that their recovery must be achieved by an effort of the will, rather than by humiliating that will by binding its action in the bonds of a “pledge.” We must treat our faculties as we treat our friends and expect others to treat us, namely, with respect and confidence.

The man who can only keep himself in the path of virtue by a chain forged with an oath, does nothing to strengthen his will or confirm his judgment, and is, after all, only the slave of a good despot instead of the victim of a bad and cruel tyrant. It is happier to be in the former state; but self is no better, so far as virtue is

concerned, for having escaped from one condition of slavery to plunge into another.

Let any one who feels exhaustion to be the cause of a craving for drink set himself seriously to consider the whole course of his life, and it will seldom happen that conscience, unless it be utterly seared, is unable to discover the cause.

The great multitude of "habitual drunkards" and the so-called "dipsomaniacs" belong to this class. They feel a "sinking" and they crave for drink. It is no use struggling against the impulse to satisfy or relieve this craving; the only legitimate mode of self-cure is to search out and remedy the cause of the "sinking." Sometimes this cause is simple and physical, at others it is in part physical and in part mental, just as the craving for opium is in part physical and in part mental.

The longing for tobacco may be cited as an *nd her* instance of the same complex causation of a greed which impels its subject to have recourse to a special stimulant or sedative. The point on which I am chiefly anxious to insist is the fact that it is with the cause the sufferer must grapple if he really desires to reform; and, inasmuch as there is an element of "feeling" or "seeming" in that cause, an effort of the will must be brought to bear on the deep inner craving itself.

It is useless to admit the craving and then try not to yield to it. The aim must be to deny and

repress or repudiate the "feeling" or "sensation" that gives rise to the desire. As regards the actual and physical part of the cause, if there is any difficulty in discovering its nature and applying a remedy, it will be well to seek medical advice, and, if necessary, a medical remedy.

In a large proportion of instances, however, it will be found that the effective cause of the exhaustion which impels a man to have recourse to drink is traceable to the neglect of proper method in the use of food.

Nothing is more essential to health and morality than a regular habit of feeding with a suitable diet. The poor are especially prone to drink, because they are badly and irregularly supplied with food. The half-starved man smokes his pipe to allay the pangs of hunger, and drinks for the [like physiological reason, although perhaps he is ignorant of the nature of the need which drives him to the use of intoxicants. Let the habitual drunkard and his friends look to the habit of feeding as one cause of the vice.

Clothing in relation to heat-production, and employment in regard to the mental debauchery of idleness which leads to exhausting forms of vice, are not less important subjects for thought and scrutiny.

Third, those who drink to quiet conscience or drown care. These are the most pitiable of the devotees of intoxication, and of course the most

difficult to cure. The habitually vicious are generally in the habit of seeking oblivion for their remorse in drunkenness.

When there is no discoverable cause for habitual drunkenness in the physical health or mental and nervous condition, the cause will commonly be found to lie in the moral life.

The social reformer should bear this in mind; and those who are anxious to help themselves out of a state of misery induced by drunkenness will do well to interrogate conscience severely as to the reasons why they cannot work or sleep without the aid of stimulants.

It would save a world of misery if we could only be more honest with ourselves, and, instead of eking out excuses for our wrong-doing by lies told to self in the secrets of the inner life, go right down to the facts of the case and root out the evil that bears bad and poisonous fruit and renders happiness impossible.

Drunkenness is in great part a disease of body and mind; and it is important to recognise this in framing measures or devising schemes of discipline for its cure. The treatment must not be wholly penal or of the nature of restraint. It is not easy, if it be even possible, to train the mind to resist the "temptation" to drink by "Total abstinence" or the removal of the opportunity.

The aim should be to detect and remedy the

secret cause of the propensity. When a man is tempted, he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed. What is this "lust," and what is its cause, in each individual case of drunkenness with which we have to deal?

There is no universal remedy for the evil. It is a malady of the body, or of the mind, or of the moral nature, or of two or more of these parts of the being Man, which needs to be studied closely, and for which an individualised plan of treatment must be devised.

General measures for the cure of drunkenness are either ineffectual, or they address themselves almost exclusively to special classes of the people, namely, those which already naturally incline to temperance, while they leave the real drunkard unhelped.

It is no proof that any great work is in progress that multitudes are found to flock to the "Teetotal" standard. It would be strange indeed if in a civilised country vast numbers of the population were unresponsive to the appeal addressed to them, and did not exhibit an exemplary readiness to abstain when they are told that their doing so is the one remedy for the evil of an abuse of drink!

The masses which form the raw material of the teetotal societies are not the drunkards of the community. They might possibly waste some time and money in drink if they were not teetotallers,

but scarcely more than the amount of time—which is money—and energy—which is health—diverted from their families by the platform and society-mania. Their own sense of right and prudence would save them from any serious offence against self and others.

I repeat that the teetotal movement will never cure the evil of drunkenness as a “curse” or “plague.” It is not a curse or a plague, but a *folly* by which many are ruined. I believe teetotalism misleads and does mischief by distracting attention from the urgent need of searching for the real cause and source of danger in each individual case of addiction to intemperance.

Let moralists and philosophers cast aside the fashionable craze about “drunkenness” as an abstract evil, and study the drunkard in the concrete. This will completely change their view, and they will find that the so-called vice is as much a disease or defect of the character, habit, or nature as any other of the sources or forms of weakness by which humanity is made subject to pain and death. Nor is it true that drunkenness is the cause of most, or even *many*, diseases of mind and body. It is nearly always itself a symptomatic form of disease springing from obscured, but not undiscoverable, causes.

I make no apology for dealing straightly with this subject. It is time to take the question in hand as a practical problem, to be solved in the

interests of happiness and life itself. I repeat, few cases are hopeless if they be thoroughly investigated and rightly understood; but they are not to be cured by an abstinence from stimulants. The *cause* of the longing or habit must be removed.

2. Oct. 91

10. Sept. 92

EATING.

EXCESS in eating is quite as bad as excess in drinking; and gluttony is even more grave and mischief-working as a social evil than drunkenness. This may appear an exaggerated, as it is undoubtedly a startling, assertion, but it is susceptible of proof; and the fact is one which ought, in the interests of happiness and prosperity, to be more generally recognised than it now is.

Public opinion is strongly impressed with the heinous nature of the offence against good morals which every man commits when he drinks an intoxicating beverage in such quantity as to render himself incapable of controlling his conduct. This is because the effects of excess in drink are instantly apparent; and misconduct of some sort commonly illustrates the loss of self-restraint. Meanwhile the state to which a man reduces himself when he consumes more food than is necessary

for the supply of his bodily wants is so entirely personal that it escapes criticism, and no one, because good manners are not scandalised, is offended.

Nevertheless the glutton overtaxes and injures his organism not less certainly than the drunkard undermines the health and stability of his nervous and general systems; while to the folly of self-injury the glutton adds the wrong of appropriating for his own use food which, if properly distributed, would have helped to supply the necessities of others who now suffer from want and practically starve that he may indulge a bestial appetite.

If the multitude of the population did not eat several times in bulk and weight more than is necessary or good for them, provisions would be barely half their present prices, and the poor who now languish for lack of sustenance would be abundantly satisfied.

Much of the food we eat is eaten to waste. The absolute quantity of food appropriated by the organism is surprisingly small as compared with the quantity rejected. Making the largest allowance for the difference between the actual bulk of what we eat and the measure of its nourishing properties, it will be found that the average feeder consumes an aggregate quantity greatly in excess of what he requires.

The first cause of this waste is doubtless the needlessly bulky form of the foods on which we

chiefly rely. In the endeavour to procure what is termed "light" aliment we squander the elements of nutriment. It is deemed a triumph of the purveyor's skill to provide the public with forms of nutriment of which much can be consumed with impunity.

No provider has yet achieved, or seriously attempted, the feat of supplying us with food so prepared that the wants of the body shall be met with the smallest possible demand on the digestive and assimilative powers of the organism. Because man can take a great deal into his stomach, it is assumed that he ought to do so; and the tendency of modern enterprise in the matter of food is, notwithstanding the introduction of condensed extracts and compressed meats, to extend rather than to diminish the total bulk of the material by which the losses of the organism in heat-production and in exercise are to be compensated.

If it were otherwise, the net result would not be very different. The fashion of life being to live to eat rather than to eat to live, if nutriment were furnished in very compact form and bulk, the glutton would hail the boon chiefly as affording increased facilities for the indulgence of his appetite.

There is however another cause of excess. We do not eat by any standard of judgment, but in obedience to a craving which is commonly mis-

interpreted. When a man feels hungry, he eats *until his hunger is appeased*; and, in the nature of things, this cannot happen until he has overloaded his stomach. The food eaten is not digested and assimilated the instant it is put out of sight. An interval must elapse between the taking-in of substances containing the elements of nutrition and the application of those elements to their destined purpose.

As a matter of fact, probably little of the solid food taken at a meal is appropriated by the organism until an hour or more after it is consumed. The sense of repletion experienced while eating, and which constitutes the appeasing of hunger, is not, therefore, in any physiological sense, the result of nourishment, but the immediate physical effect of filling the gastric organ and setting the processes of digestion in operation.

Hence it must be obvious that the sense of satiety which warns an eater to desist from the pleasures of the table, affords no measure of the extent to which he has provided for the actual wants of his system. If he consumed only a twentieth part of his ordinary meal and waited an hour, probably he would discover that he was quite as well fed as he is after eating as much as his stomach will hold and desisting only when the mechanical effects of loading the apparatus of digestion become inconvenient.

It must not be assumed, because we habituate

ourselves to eat to repletion and do not commonly suffer severely in consequence of this clumsy mode of procedure, that we are acting advisedly. Nature has provided the organism with the power of rejecting what it does not require; and the large proportional waste of food in ordinary life is the witness at once to the need, and the efficiency, of the safety-valve with which the system has been furnished, but it is at the same time a perpetual testimony to the crude and unscientific way in which we misunderstand our actual necessities and abuse our appetites.

The great majority of the ills which affect us and the diseases from which we suffer, causing us pain and shortening our lives, are the fruits of the excess we practise in feeding. Gout, rheumatism, the various forms of indigestion, and the many known and recognised results of excessive or disorderly feeding, are only the coarser and more evident consequences of overfeeding. Underlying these direct effects of excess, and unnoticed by the victims of this common error, are the multitudinous forms of organic disease and disturbance.

In short, the human body encounters more risks in its daily struggle to live, and grow, and discharge its functions, under the burden of food forced upon it than it runs by exposure to the ordinary dangers of infection; while, as a matter of fact, nearly all the morbid poisons that assail it from without are either generated from, or

called into existence by, the decomposition of food, or conveyed into the system under some one of its guises.

We give the apparatus of organic life an almost supernatural task to reject the harmful substances thrust upon it, and then complain because it breaks down or does its work imperfectly. It is difficult to make this plain without burdening these pages with details which would be unintelligible; but my failure to convince the reader's judgment will not alter the fact.

There are great practical difficulties on either side. It is hard to obtain sufficient nutriment without an encumbrance of materials which cannot be used and must be rejected, and it is necessary to avoid the error of loading the system with food which is unsuitable or excessive.

It would not be easy, and it must certainly be extremely unpleasant, to live by rule. Nor is it probable that ingenuity could devise any method of appraising the value of food which would answer general purposes. This is where and why all except the simplest schemes of dietary for health purposes fail when they come to be applied on a large scale to persons of differing temperaments and constitutions.

The question cannot be reduced to one of analysis. An article of diet may contain the elements of nutrition in abundance, but they may exist in forms under which the particular

organism is unable, or *unwilling*, to appropriate them. They are there, but practically useless. This often happens, and the result is, as it were, starvation in the presence of plenty. Some individuals cannot feed on one substance which others will take with avidity.

In the end, therefore, feeding comes to be a matter of personal experiment and experience. Instinct directs the first trial, and, the result being satisfactory, the meal is repeated, or, if it prove distasteful or indigestible—that is, to or by the special organism—the food is in future avoided.

The question we are now discussing does not so much relate to the character or quality of the food taken as to its quantity; but the two properties are closely related in practice.

The point on which I am chiefly anxious to insist is that in by far the greater proportion of instances we eat too much, and by so doing at once injure ourselves and deprive others of their due supply. The remedy for this evil is not to live by rule—because no certain or general rule can be devised—but to eat more moderately, not paying any great attention to the feeling of “appetite,” which, after all, is, in social life, an artificial and untrustworthy sensation.

Hunger would be a better guide than appetite, but that it has come to be undistinguishable from the latter. If a man were really hungry—that is,

if his system craved food and painfully longed for it—the need would be so real and great that little, if any, harm would be likely to result from sitting down to a good meal and continuing to eat until a sense of satiety was experienced. The craving would indicate a want not easily satisfied, and a full meal would be requisite.

Appetite and the so-called "hunger" of ordinary life are, however, very much matters of habit. If we have formed a custom of taking our meals at fixed hours, we want, or feel to want, them when the accustomed hours come round. There is always good in method; and, assuming that the consumption of tissue and energy by exercise is pretty much the same every day, a healthy life may be secured by orderly feeding.

Meanwhile, habit is itself sometimes the cause of evil. By the habit of heavy feeding we may come not only to take into the stomach but even to appropriate larger quantities of nutrient material than the system needs! It is in consequence of this excess chiefly that what are called "blood-diseases" and organic affections—of a certain class—occur.

It is the fashion of the day to ascribe all, or nearly all, the diseases of the body to an excessive use of alcohol. This is a prejudiced view of the matter, and not a very rational one either. It is the result of a hasty or biased judgment. For one disease really due to "drink," there are

probably two or three which are the direct effects of overfeeding. The organism readily falls into morbid habits of feeding; and important parts become thickened, enlarged, and consolidated; or they degenerate, and their proper elements are replaced by fatty matter when food is ruthlessly forced upon them.

In some organisms there is an inherited tendency to special kinds of overfeeding, which only needs the opportunity and the material to carry on a process destructive to the integrity of the organs and in the end inimical to life itself. It does not often happen that any one organism is morbidly omnivorous; but there are few individuals who, if they could form a rigidly practical view of their own inner requirements, would not find it prudent to stint the supply of some special element of food, with a view to organic health and efficiency.

It is not necessary to make ourselves slaves to a manner of living; nor is it desirable to devote too much thought to the subject; but the general maxim to live moderately and to restrain the appetite rather than gratify it would be found conducive to health and happiness in the majority of instances, the harm likely to be done by underfeeding being as nothing compared with the mischief those work in their constitutions who feed too often and eat too much.

I have said that the habit of eating too much is socially injurious, because it deprives

the masses of their due supplies. The quantity of food actually requisite to sustain life and preserve health is much smaller than that which habit allots to the population. If the rich did not consume an excessive quantity, there would doubtless be less produced; but, even allowing for the reduction that trade policy would effect in the supplies, prices would also be lowered. As it is, we are compelled to resort to many costly expedients to keep up the total supply of food to the standard of the demand which habit has created.

Take, for example, the article of animal food. The cost of producing this commodity is yearly increasing—i. e. increasing *pro rata*, or beyond the increment of the population, because the demand has altogether outrun the limits of a reasonable supply. The quantity of beef and mutton consumed by the community, per head, increases, and the increase is regarded as a token of increasing prosperity. Meanwhile the quantity of fish eaten grows less per head of the population, notwithstanding the fact that, as ordinary food for a population living as we live, fish is physiologically a better staple form of nutriment than flesh.

In short, we will live well and we will feed as we please. The inconveniences that follow upon, or arise out of, this resolve are not regarded as of any account as against the general practice and desire. What is this but the essence of gluttony?

The whole world must give way to our likings and longings for particular forms and classes of food. Wealth is esteemed chiefly as it affords the means of gratifying personal appetites and predilections.

Are we the better for this capricious feeding? Experience answers, No, certainly not. We are, on the whole, the worse, because our bodies contract habits of morbid growth, which are handed down from generation to generation, and constitute the active and underlying causes of disease.

It is bad to eat too much. It is a mistake to consume large quantities of food at a sitting, simply because we are able to eat a great deal with impunity. It is a grave error to eat too fast, not only because the apparatus of digestion is pressed and unduly taxed, but no opportunity is afforded for the satiety of the organism to express itself. These evils are characteristics of gluttony. And gluttony is a vicious propensity, the fruitful cause of many diseases and injuries, and the spirit of true wisdom in self-management will not fail to take measures for its cure.

13. Sep 92

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17. 6. 93.

“OVER-WORK.”

THIS term is essentially relative, and, at best, only imperfectly expresses the idea with which it is associated. The notion itself is not clearly defined, and the word by which it is designated adds to the obscurity. One man can do much more work than is good for him, either mentally or physically, without showing it—at least by any immediate “consequences”; while another may not be able to exert his mind or body up to within even an approximate degree of its capabilities without suffering instantly and obviously.

A general and practical consideration of the subject would seem to point to the conclusion that “over-work” must be taken to mean work which is more than enough in itself, or so performed as to react disastrously on the health of the person doing it.

We cannot, merely, say that a man suffers from over-work without leaving the nature of his malady an open question. He may have wrought too long or too continuously, neglected the conditions of healthy labour—a very common source of evil consequences, exerted himself in such manner and at such times as to strain and exhaust the powers of endurance, or undertaken

a task too great for him. Any one of several faults may have been committed, and it is impossible to guess which has been the principal factor of the morbid state into which he has fallen, unless some term more definite than "over-work" be employed to describe it.

It would seem as though the powers and capacities of the compound being of man had been placed under the guardianship of two sentinels or watch-dogs, by whose offices the worker should be warned before harm befalls him.

Thus *fatigue* stands first in the order of safeguards. The sense of weariness prompts the labourer to seek rest; but it is possible so to counteract or maltreat this protecting instinct that it shall become useless. For example, a man may habituate himself to work on when he is weary. By dint of strong effort the sense of feeling "tired" may be overcome, so that not only is the inclination to repose surmounted, but, so to say, stifled. Many industrious and impulsive workers strive to obtain the mastery over feeling in this respect, and gain their end, to the permanent peril of health.

Nature intended that the weary should rest. Fatigue was placed on duty, as it were, to watch the expenditure of strength, and to give warning of the need of recuperation. There are always large reserves of strength and power of life in the system, and fatigue stands outside them. The warning note is sounded before the innermost

stores are touched. It is therefore, generally, possible to set aside the feeling of weariness by an effort of the will.

There are still reserves of strength and power which can be called into action, but the use of these reserves is like living upon capital instead of interest. If they are invaded, there must come a time when the total of strength will be exhausted, and it will then be too late to rest; because not only will the stock of energy be used up, but the faculty of repair will itself be so played out that the process of recuperation cannot be accomplished.

Inside, or deeper than, the sense of weariness or fatigue is the sense or feeling of *pain*—a very important safeguard indeed, and one that cannot be wilfully disregarded without soon experiencing the most grave consequences. Pain, in some one or more of its varieties, is posted at all the portals of the organism.

Parts or organs of especial delicacy, or prone to be seriously damaged by excessive or disorderly use, are rendered acutely sensitive, and readily become the seats of pain. There is a beautiful adaptation of means to end in this fact, which constitutes one of the most wonderful and convincing evidences of foresight and a plan in creation and development.

Take, for example, the eye. This is an organ which may be irretrievably injured by accident

or improper use. It is, accordingly, provided with a peculiarly delicate series of protectors, which co-operate to ward off most of the perils to which it is exposed, and the nervous supply and muscular apparatus are so constructed that precisely the movements—internal and external—which are needed to shelter the organ, occur the moment it is assailed, or even threatened with injury. Although the organ is not, itself, peculiarly sensitive to pain, elements have been incorporated in its structure, spread over its surface and grouped around it, which practically render the eye a typical centre of exquisite sensitivity. If the warning given by an acutely painful or aching eye is unheeded, the organ will be injured, and perhaps the sight impaired.

The mind is capable of mastering pain as it can surmount most of the other ills and troubles of life; but the advantage gained by the effort is either purely momentary or mischievous, and it should be remembered that while a “sensitive temperament” may be troublesome, apart from the fact that acuteness of perception means not only the faculty of feeling pain but of appreciating the means and agents of refined pleasure, a dull and stolid constitution is a source of perpetual peril, because, if there be any weakness or delicacy underlying it, the incipient workings of disease or injury may be unrecognised, and the mischief will not be stayed.

It is of the highest importance to both those who are constitutionally inclined towards indolence and those who, being energetic, are likely to be incited to undue exertion by what are called “animal spirits,” to know what the significant tokens of over-work really are.

There is perhaps nothing more misleading than the educational influence of habit. Man has been furnished with special powers of adaptation. He can conform himself to almost any order and manner of life; hence it is that he has been called “the creature of circumstances.” One of the first consequences of this effect of habit has been to destroy or disturb the natural sensibilities and so render them subservient to new and disorderly ways.

By this process of distortion it has become “second nature” to turn night into day and to labour when we ought to rest. The hours of sleep* have been curtailed and so changed as to render the life which man has created for himself foreign to that for which his compound being, mental and physical, was designed.

With this change of the order of life there has been effected a not less important alteration of the sensations by which existence is accompanied if not controlled. Weariness does not possess the body and mind at the time and in the manner prescribed by nature for their protection; but it

* *Sleep and Sleeplessness* (Bogue).

does come; and, without going the length of saying that the sense of fatigue is, under our present artificial life as it doubtless would be in a state of nature, an infallible guide to rest, there is still much practical truth in the aphorism that when mind or body feels weary it actually needs rest.

In a former article on this subject I have tried to show in what "Rest" * consists, and by what means it should be sought. It is not my purpose to recapitulate the principles which are there laid down; but the fact that many varieties of fatigue exist, and therefore many methods of repose are requisite, should be present to the mind of the reader as we proceed.

The practical aim ought to be to discover how far the sense or feeling of weariness is real and, therefore, a warning token of some advance on the way to exhaustion. A rough but serviceable test will be found in the inquiry whether the feeling of fatigue is actually located in the particular part of the system which has been exercised.

For example, a person may return much fatigued from a short walk, and, falling into a chair or stretching himself at length on a couch, lament his supposed lack of physical strength to take even moderate exercise; whereas perhaps the "weariness" is not in any way associated with the muscular apparatus or its nervous system, but

* *Minds and Moods* (Renshaw).

solely mental. In short, the supposed feeling of fatigue is a sense of being "bored"; and probably the appropriate remedy would be a further brisk walk or more active mental exertion instead of physical repose. This explains the fact that not unfrequently those who "feel too tired" to stir foot or hand will suddenly be, as it were, galvanised into new life by some pleasing intelligence, the visit of a friend, or the prospect of an agreeable entertainment. The fatigue believed to be bodily existed only in the mind.

An opposite class of mistake is made when the weary and jaded of mind are urged to strong muscular activity, and because the effort suggested is successful, mental recuperation is supposed to be achieved. The mind may be diverted, but it cannot be rested, by muscular exertion.

If mental repose and recovery occur under this popular method of treatment by distraction, the happy result is due to the operation of causes other than those which the hypothesis of "diversion" recognises or includes. When the exhausted brain-worker finds "rest" in mountain-climbing, the result is not gained because his body is exercised—though that may tend to improve his general health—but because, being carried away from the daily avocations in which his mind has been exhausting itself, that part of the being finds relief in change.

When the man who cannot thus leave the cause of his brain-weariness behind him is sent to climb mountains, he is not benefited, but only the more rapidly exhausted, because his physical strength is now taxed, while his mind is still over-worked.

It will be apparent from these considerations how necessary it is to ascertain precisely what I have called the location of the sense of weariness—in other words, whether the *feeling* points directly to the *fact*, or fatigue of one part of the system is mistaken for that of some other. Making all due allowances for specialities of temperament, and taking pains to examine the state of body and mind closely and rigorously, there should be no serious error in the judgment formed.

In dealing with young persons who profess, or are supposed, to suffer from over-work, it is essential to look into the matter very narrowly. The imagination is peculiarly active in youth, and the young take strange fancies, one of the commonest of which is to believe they are working, and weary from exertion, when, in truth, their minds are simply labouring like a rusty wheel that turns round heavily on its pinion and grates; which is a vastly different matter from becoming heated by the friction caused by high speed and long-continued movement.

Youth is apt to dissipate energy in waking or

day dreams while remaining physically inactive; and when a reluctant or selfishly indolent mind consents, under pressure, or is stirred by some passing purpose, to work, it seldom puts out its full power. The result is that the toil either proves irksome from the outset or soon becomes spiritless or, which is quite as bad, impulsive and jerky. Work of this description rapidly produces symptoms which may be easily mistaken for those of over-work. By allowing his energy to run down after every effort, the toiler sacrifices all that is due to momentum in the work of the steadily industrious.

This is a more serious matter than seems to be generally supposed. It is far more difficult to rise early in the morning three days a week than to commence business at a proper hour daily. Each act of special exertion requires a special effort, whereas, if the same method be employed throughout, it becomes rhythmical, and there is no consciousness of extraordinary striving.

The same, in principle, applies to all descriptions, and every form, of labour. It is a simple policy of strength-saving or effort-saving to work regularly as well as earnestly. The reason is that effort is more exhausting than steady toil.

I do not believe "over-work," properly so called, is possible, so far as the mind is concerned. There may easily be excessive straining

in life, but this is due to wrong ways of working rather than to the magnitude of the task actually accomplished.

When a brain-worker labours steadily, he may do little on the whole, or he may do a great deal ; but in either case the result is directly determined by the capacity of the machine. Of course it is possible to over-drive the engine of the mind, just as an ordinary machine may be over-worked —in that sense—but the break-down which ensues is not caused by the amount of the work done ; it is the consequence of trying to work too rapidly.

A better notion of what happens in supposed cases of over-work would be obtained if the term “over-effort” were substituted. A man may safely do as much as his strength will allow, living regularly and allotting due portions of his time to sleep, feeding, and recreation. This last element should never be forgotten ; but recreation ought to be sought in healthy and effortless ways.

Peril begins to beset a mind the moment it becomes painfully conscious of having to force or strain itself. Even then the friction may, as I have hinted, be due to want of order and method ; but in any case, and whatever may be its cause, there is danger in forcing and pressing the mind.

The fact I am anxious to bring out is that the remedy for over-work is not so much a cessa-

tion of labour as amendment of the manner in which it is performed. I do not believe in the stories of great minds breaking down and giving way from excess of exertion. The collapse that occurs is the result of error in the course of procedure.

There may be instances in which it is difficult to see how this fault of procedure is to be remedied. Take the case of a Cabinet Minister, who, in addition to his ordinary duties as a statesman, is compelled to spend weary and exhausting hours in a Chamber which, with the blindest folly, persists in legislating at night.

It is not, of course, practicable for any one man to change the mode of public or social procedure, and therefore damage to great intellects is a constant peril; but, when a statesman does break down under such circumstances, it should be understood that the cause is not over-work, but disorderly or ill-timed exertion and over-effort. The mind has been struggling to perform a heavy task in the midst of difficulties, and labouring on wrong lines.

No state of matters resembling that just indicated ought to be allowed to occur in private life, and therefore it is impossible to avoid the conviction that what is generally called over-work is a fault not less than a misfortune, and should stir indignation not less than it excites compassion.

If a man went to a "doctor" of the old type—after the pattern sketched in professed portraitures of the brusque Abernethy, for example—with the complaint that he could not engage in athletic sports without great prostration, he not being an athlete or in training, he would probably receive a smart reply. This is precisely what those who are alleged to suffer from over-work are doing, and it points to what they deserve.

They do not make the business in which they are engaged part of their lives, and live for it as the athlete lives for his labour. The way to deal practically with cases of this class is to economise the effort they make rather than to reduce the amount of the task they are striving to accomplish, unless indeed that be too great for the compass of a busy life.

It is a mistake to "lighten labour." The effort required will be just as great and not less injurious when the sum total of the work to be done is reduced, unless the exercise be put on a new footing. The worried worker does not need to do less, but what he does must be rendered less exacting.

Relief may nearly always be found in some wise change of the hours of labour or a rearrangement of the duty, so as to make the exercise a matter of habit. This can best be accomplished by distributing the business which presses too heavily on the mind over a longer period, or breaking it up into a series of tasks, none great

in itself, and all forming successive links in a chain which shall be so continuous as to spare the mind the needless additional effort to “begin again” with each day’s toil.

We all know how the sense or feeling of fatigue may be modified by the pedestrian who trudges along a heavy road, and who is still far from the end of his journey. If he allows his mind to dwell constantly on the far-off goal, it seems as if he could never reach it; but if, instead, he takes field by field on the wayside as his standard of measurement, the consciousness of making progress is greater, and the strain is less. He must not, however, count the fields ahead of him,* or sit down to rest at short intervals and exhaust his remaining strength by repeated efforts to begin again.

The so-called “victim of over-work” becomes weary of his task but cannot abandon it, and then, by dint of hard pressing, the jaded brain is forced on its way with disastrous consequences. The work would not have exceeded his strength or seemed to be over-work if the labour had been continuous or habitual and orderly, and the pressure had been unnecessary.

When over-work threatens the mind, forget the task as a whole, and simply do the day’s work in

* See the paper on “Time” in *The Secret of a Clear Head*, which is a volume of papers supplementary to those published under the title *Common Mind-Troubles* (Bogue).

the day, leaving the morrow to "be anxious" * for itself. Live more methodically, parcelling out the time, and allowing no consideration to incite the mind to inordinate effort.

The rock on which many excellent workers go to pieces is this. They will make violent efforts to finish particular portions of a task "off-hand." They think it will relieve the mind to "get the business done." It is this straining and forcing that proves harmful. The "stayer" in work is the best of toilers—the man whose labour is orderly, and who makes his enterprise, so far as possible, effortless. It is the worry of the effort, not the work, that kills.

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CHANGE.

ONCE, at least, every year, we long for a "change." Weary with the monotonous round of occupation, the student in his library, the professional man at his desk, the toiler in society, the clerk at his books, and the man about town, the idler not

* The substitution of the word "anxious" for "take thought" in this passage is one of the many improvements in the Revised Edition of the New Testament which will make it a new and vastly more useful book for practical men than it has been.

less than the hard and steady worker, all desire "change." What is this panacea for most of the minor ills of life and final expedient of doctor and patient alike in the stress of the fight against disease?

We can to some extent, and in a loose unsatisfactory way, understand what it is to feel tired of seeing the same objects, performing the same acts, and being surrounded with the same persons and associations day after day during a long period; and, by a figure of speech which masks a fallacy, we transfer the formula of inference from one set of phenomena to another with the result of persuading ourselves that we can comprehend the latter by the former. Nothing is farther from the truth.

The instincts and appetites of the body may and do pall with satiety, but it is not easy to see why this should happen. It does not happen in regard to every sensation. For example, no healthy person grows weary of eating bread or drinking water, or of walking or riding. What then makes the body tire of particular exercises and surroundings? It would seem that what is done often must become each day *easier*. This may point to the solution of the mystery. Let us consider the case at closer quarters.

It is a law of nature that when any act is repeated the organism begins to adapt itself to the

sort of work that seems to be set for it, and at each repetition the performance is found simpler and more practicable, until at length it passes into the category of acts which are done automatically, and habit becomes second nature. Therefore less and less trouble should be found in routine duty, and, instead of exhausting the strength or energy, it ought to make an ever-diminishing requirement on the forces engaged in its accomplishment.

This is precisely what occurs ; and, so far from that which is commonly called exhaustion and weariness—the sort of weariness that makes a man cry out for “change”—being the result of loss of strength by consumption, it is the converse—namely, failure of strength from want of stimulating exercise.

It is because we find routine work increasingly easy, and it no longer stimulates the centres of energy like varied employment, we seem to grow weary. There is no excessive consumption of strength, but a failure in the supply of power. The way of life does not stir the central productive sources from which strength of purpose and energy spring so as to keep them in vigorous activity.

When a man of energy enters upon a fresh scene, and engages in work new to him, he is roused to action, and he is said to “take an interest” in his work. For a time all goes well.

The surroundings are sufficiently exciting to elicit a full supply of energy. After a while, however, there seems nothing else to be experienced; the spirit is no longer thrilled with the sense of novelty, there is no stimulation of the centres that, so to say, make strength, and a feeling of lassitude supervenes. It is not that the organism is over-worked or its powers exhausted; these powers are weakened by the failure of their motive force, the consequence of a cessation of the excitement that first called the force or energy of enterprise into action.

When, as often happens, the work in which we have to engage is chiefly automatic—i. e. performed as a matter of habit*—the weariness which occurs is of a more complex character. There is the failure of strength by the failure of proper stimulants to exertion already described; and side by side with this failure there is an increasingly irritating appeal to the will and consciousness to resume the direct control, and, in fact, again undertake the performance of work which it has taught the automatic sub-consciousness to do, and which ought therefore to be accomplished methodically by habit.

This is what sometimes befalls the man-of-business when he grows weary and longs for “change.” At first he was interested, and his

* “Habit,” in *The Secret of a Clear Head* (Bogue).

energy was elicited by the task of bringing certain powers to bear on special work. In the natural course of things his higher consciousness began to relegate the new duty to the class of ordinary work to be done by the lesser consciousness, or habit. The strain on the will and intelligence has become each day less exacting, until, by lapse of the special stimulant to his energy, he has ceased to feel interested.

If it had been possible to render the duty *wholly* a matter of habit—that is, something that could be done without thinking about it, like eating, drinking, or walking—there would have been no difficulty in perseverance; but it was of a nature which the will could not entirely delegate. What occurred was a ceaseless and provoking demand for attention to work no longer sufficiently interesting to excite energy, but still requiring some thought.

The effect of a demand of this class upon the attention is peculiarly irritating. It is like waking a man up every two or three hours in the night, interrupting him repeatedly while he is talking, or calling him away from his dinner to show some one else how to do work that ought to be done perfectly well without assistance or supervision. The wear and tear of friction begins in this way, and irritation is added to failure of strength, not, as I have said, the failure of exhaustion from excessive exertion, but a diminution of force, the

inevitable and natural consequence of a lack of active interest in life.

Change operates not so much by giving relief from labour as by applying new stimulants to the centres which supply the body with the strength and energy necessary for good and healthy work. This is a most important consideration, and one which should determine the manner in which change is employed as a remedy. It is perfectly useless to seek benefit from change unless in so doing we secure a new stimulant to call out fresh energy.

No doubt there are some natures so buoyant that the mere anticipation of new surroundings will act as a sufficient motive power to set the centres of force-generation in action; such persons are generally imaginative and emotional. They are easily stirred to enterprise, and, being so responsive to a particular set of mental excitements, not unfrequently fail when mental excitement is denied them.

The hope of change, a novel idea, a bare vision of newness, will move them; and conversely a disappointment or a little more monotony than usual will depress and cast them down. It is exceedingly difficult to deal with such temperaments; and, when we find them in our own families or our own persons, we should strive to influence the habit of thought so as to develop a faculty of work from higher motives

than those we group under the term "interest," and to make the energies responsive to the inner sense or motive of moral duty.

It is perfectly vain to expect that persons with temperaments of this class can be benefited by any change which does not supply something of novelty. They are stirred by hope, but, being also, and not less readily, cast down by disappointment, as soon as the change is made the stimulant fails, and it too commonly happens that nothing but the hope of another change will revive the palled taste. In this way ceaseless change comes to be necessary, and a type of energy is developed which, as it were, lives on change. We all know individuals who are ever flitting about from place to place, professedly in search of "rest," which, if found, would speedily kill them, or, more accurately, allow them to die of mental and nervous exhaustion.

In using change as a health-restorative and for the revival of energy, it is indispensable that the particular class of temperament with which we have to deal should be clearly understood. First dismiss the mistaken and misleading thought that the weariness that creates a "longing for change" is exhaustion, in the sense of being a using up of strength. Settle it clearly in the mind that, assuming the individual to be fairly healthy, it is a failure of energy for the lack of sufficient force in the vitality, from which he suffers,

and whereby he is depressed. There is need of a new stimulant to call the force-generating centres into full action. They have ceased to keep the organism properly supplied with strength and energy. The fire has, so to say, died down, not so much from deficiency of fuel as because it has not been stirred.

This point being made plain, it is necessary to ascertain as nearly as possible the sort of stimulant most likely to rouse the dormant force-centres. It is a frequent error to think principally of the "general health"—as it is called—in determining the choice of a method or place of change. In the last resort the sickly and debilitated are sent to their "native air." It is not the native air that does such persons good, but the revival of old energies by again placing the individual amidst the surroundings that inspired his youth.

No one derives any great benefit from his "native air" who does not find things pretty much as he left them, unless it should happen that the interest awakened, by the local transformation, itself acts as a restorative stimulant to the force-centres. The change should either supply, or incidentally secure, for the physico-mental organism a stimulant suited to its constitutional peculiarities.

Pure air is always eminently desirable, and the surroundings should be as pleasant as possible,

except for a particular class of persons who seem to be most readily stimulated to energy by inconveniences. These are the folk who derive unquestionable advantage from tours, voyages, excursions, and adventures which would utterly invalidate the more sensitive. It is impossible to put physical considerations, important as such matters really are, in the front and ignore the mental.

The mind-aspects of a change are more important than its bodily conditions. The latter are of course well worthy of note ; but the former must be paramount if real good is to be done ; and it is fair to assume that every one desires to benefit by the change he seeks and, with many a hard struggle perhaps, compasses, for himself or those in whose welfare he is interested. It is practically impossible, in dealing with a large family, to meet the mental requirements of all its members ; but it very seldom happens that enough attention is bestowed on this object.

It by no means follows from what I have said that change must be *agreeable* to the mind to prove restorative. On the contrary, it often happens that lasting advantage is derived from a change which is not congenial. The aim ought to be to apply the stimulant which is most likely to rouse the energies of the individual. It is needless to insist that this should be done dexterously and without exciting irritation. At the same time, the largest amount of good is often

gained from experiences which are not at the moment pleasurable.

It is not a happy result of the annual change with which we indulge ourselves when, on returning to home-scenes and the resumption of routine duties, these seem more than ever distasteful. There must be something mentally and morally wrong in a change which produces effects like this; or the temper is a sorry one that, being aroused, proves more troublesome than it was when simply irritable from a suppressed sense of weariness. The temporary surroundings should not be of a nature to awaken morbid or unnatural longings.

Heads of families are too prone to make the mistake of taking their households into the midst of circumstances which, with the younger members at least, have the effect of making them dissatisfied with their ordinary manner of life, their position in society, and their common surroundings at home. This is a serious blunder.

We not unfrequently see families indulging in a degree of splendour during the annual outing which must make the home-scene look dull and lifeless when it is revisited. There is little wisdom in this method of change. It is short-sighted, and often does permanent harm by over-exciting the mind or throwing it into an unhealthy train of thought and wild longing.

The change that best suits the average mental

constitution is one which stirs its energies naturally and honestly, in its *own* fashion of life. It would be wise to bestow a little more attention on this matter, and to take care that the effort to please and gratify the taste for novelty is not overdone, or allowed to expend itself in a profitless or bad direction.

Greater care for the mental aspects of change would tend to save parents and the responsible guardians of the young much disappointment and needless sorrow. Many a life-long regret has had its seed sown in the yearly holiday. If it be borne in mind that the nature of man is very much what it is made by the influences brought to bear upon it—having in regard the qualities acquired by inheritance from the parent-stock—the educational effect of change will not be disregarded. Education means the leading or calling out of those properties mental and physical with which the individual is endowed.

Change is, as we have seen, chiefly effective as it brings into action the deeper centres of energy in the system. It follows that the influence of change must, whether we will or not, be formative, or developmental, on the minds of the young. How great care should therefore be bestowed on the task of making this process beneficial!

The stirring of energy must be judicious; and the energy elicited should be of a sort which will add to the stock of immediately useful force

—being available for the better discharge of duty on the return home. Unless change has this effect, it fails in respect of its main purpose —namely, the brightening of the life and the improvement of the health.

Speaking generally, change for mere change's sake, or an outing which consists in incessant change, will not be permanently advantageous, and may do great mental harm. This treatment has the effect of rendering the life of energy—or the energy of life—more than ever dependent on special stimulants. By-and-by the force-centres, whence the energy springs, will not, as it were, work without artificial stimulation. What happens in result of this method of training is what occurs in the case of a horse which, being naturally lazy, is habitually urged to exertion by the whip.

Society is full of jaded people, perpetually dependent upon excitement and change for their vitality, and lapsing into inaction whenever novelty is lacking in their surroundings. A more uncomfortable and troublesome temperament it would be hard to imagine.

The man who must have change at short intervals, or he will fall into a bad state of mental health, is like a wine-bibber who lives on spirituous stimulants. He has no stamina, and may break down at any moment. The young should at any cost be saved the miseries and perils of

this constitutional temperament. Change is good and useful as a remedy, but it should not be abused by being pressed into the service of life as a necessary, and converted into a food.

My. 10. 91 15 Sep. 92
My. 6. 93. —————

LIFE-STRENGTH.

THE inner power of living may be called life-strength. It is the force that holds the being together in spite of the shocks and strainings to which the human craft is subjected in the tumultuous heaving of circumstances and the storm of existence. Those who possess this power in its fulness, and are strong in life, live easily, while others in whom the life-strength is weak are themselves weakly and ever exposed to the risks of wear and tear, with the oft-recurring peril of being dashed to pieces by some exceptional vicissitude.

The production and accumulation of this life-strength depend very much on ourselves. Not that it is necessary that the work of building up a reserve of strength should be carried on knowingly. Like most natural functions, it may be—and as a matter of fact is best—performed without the conscious aid of the mind; but it may be accomplished as an act of volition; and that is

why I have chosen the subject of life-strength for a few concluding remarks before the reader lays this little volume aside.

Everybody ought to have a large stock of life-strength. The sick and those who are frequently ailing or who suffer from exhausting diseases stand in especial need of this reserve. Upon it depend the happiness and, in large measure, the duration of their lives. The strength of life is derivable from either of several different sources. Some persons live by mind-force, some by nerve-force, others by muscular strength, and there are those who seem to live almost exclusively by their purely animal powers of digestion and assimilation.

Science has very nearly completed the proof that, notwithstanding its various forms and manifestations, the life which pervades organic nature is one. The life of the plant is the same in kind as that of the animal, even consciousness being included. There can be little, if any, doubt that the vegetable kingdom possesses mind of the same essence as, though far lower in degree of development than, that of the animal.

It is therefore possible to speak of the forms or orders of life as composing a successive series of grades rising from the lowest conceivable spark of vitality to the full blaze of intellectual genius. The life of man energises the whole of his compound being, and is the same energy or strength

whether it expresses itself in a simple force of growth by nutrition, in virtue of which some tissue of the body grows or is replaced after consumption by use—as the yeast-plant is seen to grow under the microscope—or whether it glows in the living thought of the poet or the statesman, evolved by some change of place or form, or as yet unexplained action—perhaps an altered rate or rhythm of the vibrations—of brain-cells or molecules.

The identity of the life of body and the life of mind is the first lesson of the advanced physiologist; and, in the light which that knowledge sheds on the subject of vital energy, it is no longer difficult to understand how it comes to pass that, whereas life is in all cases and under all conditions the same, it is capable of being displayed in forms or trains of actions, which appear to be widely different in their nature.

The problem of individual life, when the task of living becomes difficult, is to discover in what particular direction the source of vital power most readily accessible and productive lies, and to take especial care that the supply of life-strength through *that* channel is adequate to the needs of the whole body. If a habit of living by one form of vitality has been established unconsciously—as generally happens—it is not easy to change that habit; but if anything should hamper the accustomed supply, or obstruct the channel

through which it is wont to flow, the stream of vitality may be interrupted or cut off altogether, and existence cease.

The highest manifestation of life-strength is undoubtedly that which is made in the life of brain—that is, mind; but, when the individual lives, so to say, on his “mental strength,” he is peculiarly liable to fall ill or die when the exercise of intellectual power begins to be embarrassing. The beautiful ordinance of nature which makes nutrition complementary to action, and activity tributary to health, ensures that orderly brain-work shall never kill a man.

It is not “over-work,” as we have seen, that harms, but irregular, jerky, and unsustained effort. The mind which, as it were, nerves the whole body and makes the organism its tool, will not wear out the body, but, on the contrary, will keep it in vigorous integrity by working it, so long as the intellectual activity is orderly as well as vigorous.

The “men of mind” who break down are either worried, or jaded by effort. Anxiety and distress or depression, such as disappointment brings, are the worst enemies of the brain-workers whose lives are dependent on their energy of intellect. They cannot surmount the difficulty of mental discomfiture or weakness, because it is by their minds they live. When a man of this class, the actively intellectual, comes to a standstill, the

block is on the main line, and the whole traffic is stopped. The supply of life-strength is cut off because the channel through which he has been in the habit of drawing his supplies of vital force is interrupted.

Whether such a man should not early in life have opened up for himself other channels of supply is a question which must be answered in the affirmative; but I am now speaking of those who have formulated their manner of living, and would find it difficult, if not impossible, to make any great change in their main habit of existence.

Persons thus situated ought, above all things, to see to it that they are making so good and plain a way with their "head-work" in middle life that, when they are old, they will not need to depart from it. It is barely possible for a man who has committed himself to brain-power as his special form of energy and, therefore, his principal source of vitality, to leave off working up to his full strength until the close of his career. The tale of work accomplished will grow less as age advances; but, without intellectual exercise, the "man of mind" would fall ill and quickly die. The relief which any weakness or weariness may require must be sought in change to some new variety of the same kind of activity, rather than in idleness.

To live happily and in spite of difficulties, the

brain-worker must have intellectual employment in which he can feel an interest and engage with energy, even though this work be outside his routine-occupation and, in a sense, an extra burden. If it be really pleasurable, this play-work may be trusted to produce more force than it consumes, and the body as a whole will be benefited. Many a statesman has been recalled to health, and entered upon a new lease of existence, solely by the reviving power of a sudden appeal to his supreme centres of consciousness for the force of the life of mind, which, in his case, was also the force of life as a whole.

The same thing happens frequently in the lower walks of life. Interest in some special enterprise, or a vigorous call upon the mind for action, whether the occasion be one of pleasure or pain, so stirs the dormant energy that the flame of vitality is rekindled; and the spring of life-strength being fed by mind-force, is restored.

Nerve-force is something different from mind-force, though the two forms of life-strength are often closely associated. A man may be "nervous"—using that word in its true grammatical sense as meaning full of nerve-force—without being "intellectual." He may be quickly appreciative of his surroundings, sensitive to impressions, and responsive to stimuli; he may have keen and vigorous faculties of perception, and the skill and the power which give excellence in feats of

address, precision, and ingenuity, and yet exhibit no special aptitude for exercises of the mind, properly so called.

A being of this type not uncommonly lives by, or through, the energy of his favourite pursuits, those in which he delights and excels. Cut him off from these sources, or occasions, of energy, and he will languish. It is not that the acts he performs are in themselves life-giving or health-preserving ; but they are, to him, the lungs through which he has learnt to breathe, the sources of his happiness, the objects of his enterprise, the means of his relation to the outer world, without which he is unable to exist.

It is the fashion to praise field-sports and the chase as healthful. The fact is that hunting, shooting, fishing, yachting, mountaineering, cricketing, and the like pastimes are not so much healthful in themselves as sources of life and health to those who engage in them. These very occupations would speedily prove the death of persons who did not regard them as life-giving or strength-preserving.

As we descend in the order of development from the higher to the lower forms or manifestations of life, we may note that it is less common to find men depending so exclusively as the brain-worker does on a single source of life-strength for his supplies of vital energy.

The strong-nerved man who takes pleasure in

feats of personal skill is also, as a rule, fond of more exclusively muscular exercises, such as pedestrianism and the coarser varieties of athletics. This often enables him to live by vigorous muscular energy when his special forms of activity are no longer available.

Muscular force or strength stands next in order as we pass down the scale, and the like rules apply to its exercise. The man of muscle must be active, or his life will not merely cease to be worth living, but become impracticable. Take an active man out of his sphere of activity and he will quickly lose heart and health, and finally begin to droop in idleness—not actual idleness perhaps, but a state of being which does not call out the particular form of energy by which he lives. Quiet is oppressive to him, and the absence of bustle occasions a lowering of his vital powers which reduces him to the ebb of death.

The last class of beings I need instance in illustration of my point is that of the men who live to eat, or who, at best, perform the smallest possible part in life beyond bare existence. These are the men who are animal, and nothing more. If they cannot indulge their appetites and instincts, they are miserable.

It would be little loss to the world if such degraded and degrading varieties of humanity could be allowed to exhaust and exterminate themselves. Unfortunately their wants are few in number,

though they are voracious as to their demands. They do not occupy any notable place in the social system; but we find them everywhere, in all places and ranks, and among all classes and coteries.

It is useless to tell these vegetating and yet predatory creatures that they ought to bestir themselves and find other modes of living and sources of life-strength than those with which they are associated, and upon which they rely.

The moral of the reflection, so far as I have been able to carry it, is simply this. We all live by some special means or way of life which habit has incorporated with our natures. When mature age has been reached, it is seldom possible, and hardly ever wise to try, to change this habit. We have made our bed and must lie on it. Nothing therefore remains but to strive to cultivate the habit formed, so far as it is a wise one, and to vary its method or precise form from time to time, instead of striving to change it altogether.

Many a man who has gone on very well in one way of life falls ill or dies when he tries another, although that other might have been better for him if he had taken to it earlier. Meanwhile, in training the young, and in self-conduct during the earlier years of life, it is well to avoid the single-barrelled mode of living. The mind should be cultivated, the nerves developed, the

muscles brought out and strengthened, and the animal appetites and propensities disciplined and subordinated in their proper place.

The whole being of man is worthy of the utmost endeavour to perfect that which has been entrusted to his guardianship. It is a mistake to neglect any of the gifts bestowed on us. Every element of the physico-mental constitution should receive the consideration and training due to it. The net result gained will be greater if *all* parts of the nature are developed than if only a few are cultivated, however high the point of excellence reached by special training may seem to be.

This is a matter of practical economy which needs to be pressed on the consideration of the reputably wise. It is too often forgotten or, which is the same thing in the end, disregarded in the education of the young and in the training of the stripling and adolescent.

There must come a time in every experience when the prolongation of life will be a matter of life-strength; and then it will be found that, unless special precautions have been taken, the needed supply can be obtained only from one source, or centre, through a channel which it may be too late to deepen or extend. It will however be something to know where this source of vital energy lies, what it is, and how to reach it. With the purpose of showing that this knowledge may, and ought to, be gained *before* the hour

of need and urgency, I have passed the subject thus rapidly in review.

There is evil and there is danger in thinking over-much of self and striving too earnestly for the lengthening of the life that now is; but it is a duty we owe the All Father, the Lord and Giver of life, to use His gift wisely; to lay it out as a talent to the greatest advantage, and, in a true sense, to make the Best of Life.

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